



Gratia A. Countryman and Family Papers.

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There are mighty social forces at work today.

None of us know what will happen from week to week.

We feel that we are living on a volcano that may erupt at any time. Changes are all about us, and may become more revolutionary than we dream. We cannot tell.

But there are some things that do not change, and that have not changed in our march down the centuries. Human nature and the needs of human beings have not changed, nor has the value of books and the value of an education changed. It is with these unchangeable things and their relation to each other that we librarians deal. Other values are changing; material possessions are uncertain, the distribution of wealth is fluctuating. Every business and profession is undergoing strain and stress. But the fundamental needs of men and women for opportunities of growth and development are unchanged. A tremendous responsibility rests upon all of the educational forces to supply the opportunities for men and women to fit themselves for the new conditions in which they must live.

You and I know that ignorance has always been a

menace to civilization. The world progresses by ideas, by thinking, and we are going to work out a new world society, not with arms, but with brains.

In the past people have been afraid of thinking.

All through the centuries they have been afraid of great minds that ventured out upon new ideas,--

Sophocles, Jesus Christ, Galileo. But we no longer

burn men at the stake because they have proclaimed

the truth. This scientific age has brought about a

desire to know truth and to share truth. As we look

into the future pregnant with possibilities, we know

that men and women ^{not the few, but the many} must learn to think and to read

and to study if they are going to be prepared for

the possibilities that are just ahead. We pick up

book after book with prophecies of a new world within

our reach if men dare to grasp it. Science and

technology have prepared the setting for the most

majestic civilization that the world has ever seen.

Will men be able to fit themselves into it, will

they be equal to forming new political relationships,

new economics, new social conditions to match the

new inventions and discoveries of the scientific

world? ^{Is the common man interested? Does he have any realization of what is taking place?} The fundamental need is for us to be prepared

Today is for men and women prepared

for participation in this changed and changing world.

The present difficulty is that changes all over the world are coming so rapidly that the common people haven't had time to keep up with them. They are perplexed and bewildered. Take for instance, the problem of government. Popular government is facing a trial, with many countries turning to dictators, because progress can move no faster than mass intelligence which makes public opinion. Take our international problems; there might be a tidal wave of peace and understanding if it were not for uninformed public opinion, which lets the "unseen assassins" preach armies and navies. And as to our social troubles, I would like to quote from Dean Ford of the University of Minnesota who said/ ^{in a recent address} that "our present civilization will accept the newest in science without question but the most timid suggestion of social and political readjustments is rejected. Chicago opens the gates of the Century of Progress by a beam from Arcturus through the magic of a photo-electric cell. At the same time her schools are poverty stricken through municipal mismanagement and corruption. Our President's voice was heard through the radio by a

whole nation a few evenings ago, a marvelous thing that; but he is besieged by hungry office seekers wholly untrained and unfit for the government's business." So great are the contrasts between scientific advances and our social weaknesses. We aren't moving at an even tempo. We are living in the dark ages in the most enlightened scientific period of the world. What about our mounting crime records, our industrial conditions, our sweat shops and child labor? What about our methods of enforcing law, our racial antipathies and injustices, our conscienceless race for wealth? Science is furnishing us with untold conveniences and satisfactions of life. But after all, it is humanity and not science that determines our civilization,-- men, not machines. We have yet to learn the art of living together. The interdependence and social relations of men and not the gifts of science will set the course of the new social order ~~which we with other institutions are trying to~~ ~~direct.~~ It will be directed by men who read and think and know.

Yes, the fundamental need of society in this re-
building process of today is for men and women ^{many men + women} who ^{groups everywhere} read and study and think. This is the objective, as I

think of it, of a great movement, an organized,
growing movement which we call Adult Education.
We librarians recognize it. The Ochs men are beginning to recognize it. Various organizations are recognizing the need. The Govt has recognized it.
We cannot look at the social needs today and not realize the deep significance of the movement. Out of the social body must come the reconstruction of society; from the common people must come the leaders of tomorrow. *but opportunities for education, for reading, for discussion must be widespread*
And this is the point toward which I am heading.

Libraries are a basic agency in this movement. In the process of education and re-education, re-adjustment, and vocational preparation, books, those priceless tools, books, *and librarians; books and librarians* together with those who intelligently collect and ~~administer~~ *distribute* them, will have a large and important part, whether ~~we~~ *librarians* serve independently or as the working partners of other agencies. We cannot be librarians, as I conceive of the responsibilities of librarianship, without helping this movement to the limit of our resources and personal influence. *It must stretch out into the farthest reaches of our states.*

As I have watched the throngs of men and women in our reading rooms, *especially since the depression wrapped them in a wet blanket* I have thought not so much of the ^{unhappy} leisure time which they were trying to fill, as of the habits of reading and thinking which were fitting

them, whether they realized it or not, to adjust themselves to new situations. This opportunity to read and study is beyond price, and this opportunity ^{from} together with ^{our sympathies} ~~constant~~ personal guidance is what we contribute. It is an absolutely indispensable service which no other agency but libraries can contribute. Books and an understanding librarian who can fit the book to the level of understanding of ^{each} ~~the~~ individual patron is the finest possible school.

I want to emphasize over and over again the importance of the librarian in this particular task. Most people who want to learn, and this applies equally to most college people as well as to poorly educated ones, do not know what books to choose. ^{and their own choices frequently discourage them.} We have estimated in our Library that eighty or ninety per cent. of the people who come to us do not know what they want. They need help in looking up information; they need help in choosing something to read just for pleasure; they must have help ^{if they want to plan} in planning a reading course. ^{Most people are helpless in the world of books and flourish about it.} ~~All of us have been doing more or less~~ ^{Education, the librarian is an important factor} of this type of work ~~always~~, but as the greater need has developed, so we must intensify our work along this line.

P Now we have all been doing adult Education more or less all the time. But as the greater need has developed through the social need, and the mind increased & increasing leisure

In our own Library, we now have three readers' advisers where we had one, and they are so busy working out reading courses that they are far behind the requests. *at the present time* Every other special department is co-operating and doing much of this special advisory work. In our hospital service we are watching the needs of patients who are able to study, *helping them to read along their lines of interest* and every Wednesday just before the truck makes the hospital deliveries I see our eight hospital assistants through the stacks hunting up references and consulting with special departments, so that bedridden people may use their unwelcome leisure to some purpose. In our fifty or so business house libraries, we encourage every group of employees who express any desire to form a study group and as far as possible see that they get the right books, *and are started out on some interesting line* Under the new plan of Federal relief work, we hope to push this work in factories and business houses much farther.

A week or so ago I visited our city workhouse to arrange for a small library and *a supply* of magazines. *There were* There were four hundred or five hundred men locked in their cells at five o'clock *every morning doing nothing* who might just as well be having some kind of adult education classes at night instead of the deadly monotony of a long evening in a locked cell. We think we may have

the benefit of some teachers under the Federal Relief Plan for ^{these prisoners} ~~Adult Education~~. Our University Extension classes have entered the State Prison and recently an art teacher told me that her classes in prison were the most intelligent and interesting of any that she had. Our prison has an excellent library and an intelligent prison librarian under the supervision of a trained librarian of our State Board of Control. There seems to be no end to our opportunities in and out of our libraries, and opportunity makes responsibility.

We all know that the increased demand upon ^{Library} ~~our~~ resources is beyond parallel in the history of libraries. Professor Beard points out that this economic crisis differs from all others in that it has led men and women to serious thinking and so to serious reading. Professor Fosdick suggests that this crisis may mark a revival of learning. We may easily ^{from our own experience} believe that this revival of learning is already on its way. We are not seeking to promote Adult Education without response. There is ^{without question} a new eagerness for knowledge. Our own Library has had an influx of 45,000 new borrowers, -- ^{in the past two years} 45,000 people who had never ^{before} used the ^{have registered for borrowers card} Library. How many more there are who use our reading

Constantly
rooms without being registered we do not know, but
the reading rooms are crowded. *often sitting on radiation or standing to read*
Mr. Milam, Secretary
of the American Library Association, estimates that
between four and five million new readers have used
libraries during the depression. *And yet there are*

and, unvoiced fears in all of our cities
But now let us turn to another phase of our

library problem and of Adult Education. Mr. Milam

also reports that forty millions of people in the
United States are without access to libraries. *These are the ones which are subjects for Adult Education. Some of these are in my state; some are in yours. There is not anything which can be said of the value of free libraries to the city dweller that does not apply equally well to citizens in rural districts.*

of villages & to men in mining regions
Books are just as indispensable; The times are just
as hard for the farmer and probably more so. He
needs just as much enlightenment on world problems
and domestic affairs. He feels the same discouragement and unrest. He has leisure time and fewer opportunities for inexpensive recreation. Whatever
libraries can contribute to the enrichment of life
in cities, to the education of children and especially
of adults, and to the *fruitful* use of leisure time, that much and
more could they contribute to those in isolated
places.

Here is a recent letter from Northern Minnesota and it is typical of many others which ^{also} come from Dakota and Montana and probably typical of many which you have received: "Would you please tell me whether we may receive discarded books from your library. We live forty miles from the nearest library and so we are unable to secure books. My brother is an invalid just now and would appreciate some." Can any one doubt the pleasure which even worn out copies would bring to thousands of families like this? *who crave books*

~~Of course it is true that~~ Improvement of rural life is one of the major problems before the country; the rural school is one of the weakest spots in the educational world and the rural school library which might be made a community library is one of the most vital of rural life problems. How can a child be equipped for citizenship, for community life, for the use of leisure time, who has not had any books to read or who has not learned to read with understanding? *how can the family be intelligent about the outside world if he* We believe with all the enthusiasm we have that the *never reads* equalization of opportunity for library service is the largest problem before us, and must be solved. That forty million who have no access to libraries,

whether in city or country, are the very people whom we need to reach in our Adult Education program. It is our responsibility and will remain our responsibility, especially in our own states, until we can know that each little child in a rural school can tuck a good book under his arm as he goes home from school, until we know that in every village and country district the family can gather around the fire with their books as we ourselves love to do.

Have read this book
We are sure that some states are under way, that others are getting under way, and that it can be done if we keep at it long enough and diligently enough. It may mean that we must get new library legislation or that we work what machinery we already have.

Return to
The most successful solutions have been made *Especially when there was a reasonable appropriation*
through State Library Commissions. These have

tried to developed library consciousness throughout the state.

They have stimulated townspeople to establish local libraries and have helped them to organize and to select their books; they have usually had a system of carefully chosen traveling libraries. Little villages can borrow these; farming communities and rural schools can borrow them, study clubs can borrow package libraries on the subject they are studying,

and individuals can borrow for their personal reading. This makes extension classes and study groups possible.

We have had for thirty-three years such a Commission in Minnesota, and I know of nothing more interesting than the daily mail of this office from rural clubs, from P. T. A. groups, from stranded families miles from railroads. You and I can scarcely know what it means to live in that sort of isolation. But if our imagination is good, we can guess what a godsend it would be to us to receive a package of books for the long winters in the wilds of Minnesota or Colorado. We are inclined to believe that the traveling library, selected and administered by trained people, will continue for many years as the most economical and practical method of reaching the small and scattered communities. It is a flexible method, and can adapt itself to any project of University Extension, or Farmers' Institutes, or small study groups.

from County School teachers
It is a cry from Macedonia
any day

The Minnesota Library Commission later grew into a Division of the State Department of Education. With us, the ^{if} combination has been a happy marriage.

It has not changed in any particular the function or activities of the Library ^{Commission} ~~group~~; it has about the same independence that it had before, but it has added to its task the supervision of the school libraries. The Library Division prepares the elementary and high school lists from which schools must buy if they are to have the State Library Aid for schools. ^{It supervises the school libraries and the} It is interesting, I think, that the ^{qualifications for school librarians} rules of the Board expressly state that the State Library Aid cannot be used for text-books or supplementary readers, the object being to form libraries for children to enjoy. Our law also provides that ^{Read Law} School Boards may enter into contract with Public Library Boards to make the school library a branch of the public library, ^{to pay for the librarian jointly.} a plan which we have worked out, as extensively as funds would allow, between the Minneapolis Library and the public schools. ^{the library administering the elementary school & the junior high libraries} But as I did not mean to side-track on the ^{subject of school libraries} subject of school libraries, we will return to our problem of books for rural people. The most interesting library development of recent years is ^{or better yet the Regional Library} the County Library movement. ^{Supervised} This is an effort to do better and more intensive work for rural communities than can be done by the Traveling Library

It is interesting
the library
branches of the public library

plan. As its name suggests, it covers the county or several counties, and is supported by them.

It is successful and effective to just the degree that it has money to function with, and its possibilities are very great.

At the risk of overworking the personal pronoun, I would like to outline the work in our County. The County Commissioners have made a contract with the Minneapolis Library, as the administrative agency of the County, and have levied a mill tax ^{Annually for 12 or 20 years} to carry the ~~expense~~ ~~of carrying~~ on a county library system. The Minneapolis Library is open to County residents; they may have a card and draw books directly or they may send in requests through the County branch. The best part of our County system is the live and enthusiastic librarian who directs it. She ^{has learned to know practically} ~~knows~~ every one in the County; every teacher and child waits with anticipation for her visits. It would not be the success that it is if she were not so competent and so friendly.

The system has developed in just the same way that a city system develops. It is a public library ^{for the County} with a central collection and a system of branches,

stations, school libraries, and a delivery system.

All of the expenses, both for the Central head-

quarters and each of the branches is paid from the
which is administered by the County Librarian
County Library Fund. There are now branch libraries *246*

in the 21 villages and consolidated schools, each
with a pleasant reading room, a well selected col-
lection of books and an experienced local librarian.

Some are open every day and some but two or three
days a week. There are 14 stations in crossroads
stores, town halls, or even private homes. Besides

these there are collections in the 89 rural schools
The Schools make a contract with road team
of the County. The book truck containing 500 books
on inside shelving visits every point once a month, *and then*

rain or shine, good roads or muddy, changing the *every Saturday*
books in the schools, carrying new books to branches *sees a*
and bringing back those no longer needed. On the *group*
way about the truck stops at private homes: 285 *of teachers*
families have regular monthly service. For fear *in the County*

some one will be missed we have a parcel post
a postman call or a telephone call will start a book.
service. We believe we are reaching in one way or *room consulting*
another every rural group and nearly all rural *with the County*
families. We feel sure that the County is getting *staff as in*
just as complete a service outside of Minneapolis *the books*
as within. *they will*
hand on the
next delivery.

Now these country folk are prepared for Adult Education. Their taste, when they have access to books, is just as broad and varied as that of city people. They want books on cars and farm machinery and insecticides, but they also are interested in history and government. Numbers of groups of young mothers organized last winter for child study; another organized to study peace questions. Rural P. T. A.'s and rural churches use books for their social programs, The County Agent, County Superintendent of Schools, and our County Library Director keep closely in touch with each other for all County activities. One librarian reports that many people in her neighborhood have followed up the reading courses in the Reading with a Purpose series. This last spring the County Librarian had a talk with the senior classes in the County high schools, and as a result, reading courses were worked out for a number of young people and the necessary books for these courses placed in their community branch.

On the whole, Minnesota has been fairly well prepared to take on the Federal Relief Work plan for Adult Education. It is already under way in

Minneapolis, and is pushing farther and farther out into the rural sections. One of the best planned projects is in the County including the Iron Range section. And so I come back to re-iterate that we have a responsibility to our state in relation to the opportunities which it offers to all, not a part, of its citizens. In this crisis when the Federal Government is seeing the necessity of educating its adult citizens and is taking steps through the state organizations to encourage such education, surely every state should welcome the chance to organize for such service.

Perhaps we ourselves need a new vision as we face into larger and far reaching movements. I believe that it will take something more than brains or books to reconstruct our social relations. They must be rebuilt on the recognition of our personal interdependence. Civilization cannot be built on selfishness and greed. The one increasing purpose that runs through all efforts to build a new civilization is goodwill among men, a co-ordination of individual interests for the good of the whole.

with fifty or more relief teachers discussing group leaders who met Monday night last

Form groups

The State

Department

reports the

76 activity

centers have

already been

created

54 3 am

which are

going to

have frequent

class work

1000

Reminds

from relief

lines

Rec Mr. Zook

believe in brains but believe that it will take something more than brains

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Return here

others' mel. being

they

page

James Truslow Adams, in his Epic of America, says that our contribution "lies not in the field of science or religion or literature or art, but in the creation (of what he calls) the American dream-- a vision of a society in which the lot of the common man will be made easier and his life enriched and ennobled." The objective of our work ^{if I can put it} is to ^{into words} bring to men through the agency of books a stimulus to their mental and spiritual energies and to enrich the content of their lives.

We have just now an unparalleled opportunity ^{not only to help educate but} to inspire men and women. People need a new vision of life. These times have found them, sadly enough, without inner resources. They have counted their happiness by the abundance of things which they possessed and now they are indeed impoverished. It is one of our great privileges to help them to find some of the essential meanings of life and to put them into contact with the finer things that will strengthen their moral fibre.

^{and I} You can afford to spend and be spent for ^{the realization} what Mr. Adams calls "the American dream."

I notice that my subject reads "Retrospect and

A Forward Look -19-

Prospects." I haven't indulged in much retrospect.

I am more interested as I believe you are in prospects. Dr. Coffman of the University of Minnesota in his report to the Regents last fall said that every depression has been followed by a great educational awakening, and he proved it by illustrations. As this depression has been greater than any other, can we not hope for a greater awakening than ever? We stand, as I believe, facing a new dawn. Each of us will do without disheartenment all that we can to prepare men for it. Who else could do our work if we didn't? The only reason for looking backward is to help us to look forward more intelligently. We plan today with the far look ahead. It is the spirit of our profession.

I know you are saying, What can we do with our budgets cut to the quick. Yes, I know; they are badly deflated. But are we ourselves deflated. We cannot afford to be discouraged. We can only afford to see the far view steadily. ~~and~~
~~more time~~